

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A freight transportation marketplace accessible to users over a network, comprising:

10 an account management system that assigns roles to the users;

a buy/sell system for the creation of a tender agreement between at least two users;

an order fulfillment system, wherein the order fulfillment system enables fulfillment of the tender agreement;

15 an action defining system that defines possible user actions, possible user information and consequences of the possible user actions; and

a user interface portion that permits communication over the network among the marketplace and the users.

20 2. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 1, wherein

the roles comprise buyer and seller; and

the account management system defines buyer accounts and seller accounts for at least some of the users.

25 3. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the roles define at least one scope and at least one privilege.

4. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the account management system further comprises:

an account maintenance system that maintains the buyer and seller accounts,

10 a rate management system which allows sellers to manage rates in the seller accounts,

a track and trace system that archives track and trace events,

the buy/sell system further comprises:

a catalog sales system,

15 an auction sales system,

a matching system that, in response to a capacity query or a demand query, produces all matches from the auction sales system and/or the catalog sales system, wherein the buy/sell system creates a purchase event in response to any of the users selecting any of the matches,

20 a pricing system that creates a price for the match selected, and

a tender agreement creation system which is initiated in response to the creation of the purchase event and includes the price; and

the order fulfillment system further comprises:

an exception management system for altering the tender agreement, and

25 a payment system that pays a portion of the price to the seller.

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5 5. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the account management system further comprises an enrollment system.

6. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 5, wherein the enrollment system further comprises:

10 an introduction component, wherein the introduction component provides an introduction to the marketplace;

a demonstration component, wherein the demonstration component provides a demonstration of the marketplace; and

15 an enrollment processing system that enrolls the users in the marketplace and establishes the buyer and seller accounts.

7. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the account management system further comprises an account maintenance system.

20 8. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the account maintenance system further comprises a plurality of user profiles.

9. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the account maintenance system further comprises a plurality of seller's profiles and a plurality of
25 buyer's profiles.

5 10. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the seller's
profiles further comprises a sellers rules tariff.

11. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the buyer's
profile further comprises a predetermined time period.

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12. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the account
maintenance system further comprises a hierarchical account structure.

13. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 12, wherein the
15 hierarchical account structure provides security for the marketplace and the users.

14. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 12 wherein the hierarchical account structure
includes at least three levels.

20 15. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 14 wherein the at least three levels include, a
payor group level which includes at least one payor group, a user group level which
includes at least one user group and a user level which includes at least one user.

25 16. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 15 wherein the at least one user is assigned at
least one role.

5 17. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 16, wherein the roles further comprise an account administrator.

18. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the roles further comprise a rate administrator, a rate contact, tender contact and an accounting contact.

10 19. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 15 wherein the at least one user group is assigned at least one role.

20. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 15 wherein the payor group is assigned at
15 least one role.

21. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 15 wherein the marketplace is assigned at least one role.

20 22. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 13 wherein the hierarchical account structure provides functional security, data level security and authentication.

23. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 22, wherein the at least one scope provides data level security.

5 24. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 23 wherein, the at least one privilege provides functional level security.

25. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 15 wherein,
the payor group level defines membership status and the user groups;
10 the user group level defines accounts, users and roles; and
the user level defines user operations.

26. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the account management system further comprises a rate management system which allows sellers to manage their rates.

15 27. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 26, wherein the user interface portion includes a rate management user interface portion.

28. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 27, wherein the rate management user
20 interface portion includes either manual interaction among the users and the marketplace or 1-way interaction with process enrichment among the users and the marketplace.

29. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 26, wherein the rate management system permits sellers to indicate to the marketplace their desire to participate in marketplace-
25 created freight transportation services.

5 30. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 26, wherein the rate management system comprises a catalog rate management system and a fuel surcharge management system.

31. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the catalog rate management system further comprises the steps of:

10 allowing sellers to provide to the marketplace and maintain their rates over the network;

allowing sellers to approve rates; and

making their rates available to the users.

15 32. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 31, wherein the catalog rate management system further comprises public and private rates.

33. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the fuel surcharge management system comprises a means for allowing sellers to manage fuel surcharges.

20 34. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the fuel surcharge system comprises fuel surcharges managed by the seller wherein the fuel surcharges comprise effective dates.

25 35. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the rate management system further comprises an accessorial fee management system.

36. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 35, wherein the accessorial fee management system comprises accessorial fees managed by the seller.

37. A marketplace as Claimed in Claim 36, wherein the accessorial fees include,
10 demurrage fees, storage charges, stop-off charges, detention fees and lump sum fees.

38. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the account management system further comprises a track and trace system that archives track and trace events.

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39. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 38, wherein the track and trace events may be created by users or the marketplace or both the users and the marketplace.

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40. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in claim 39, wherein the track and trace events trigger occurrences within the marketplace.

41. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 40, wherein the track and trace system triggers occurrences in any of the following, the account management
25 system, the buy/sell system, the order fulfillment system and the action defining system.

5 42. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 40, wherein the occurrences include the marketplace sending messages to users.

43. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 39, wherein the track and trace events are created by any one of a group comprising: creating or updating
10 orders, auctions or catalog rates, changing the status of orders, auctions or catalog rates, adding comments to the tender agreement and the marketplace receiving messages from any of the users.

44. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 43, wherein the any of
15 the users is the seller and the messages received from the any of the sellers triggers the order fulfillment system to make payment to that seller.

45. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 44, wherein the message received is a POD message.

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46. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 38, wherein the user interface portion includes a track and trace user interface portion.

47. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 46, wherein the track
25 and trace user interface portion includes any of the following, a manual interaction among the users and the marketplace, a 1-way interaction among the users and the

5 marketplace, and a 1-way interaction with process enrichment among the users and the marketplace.

48. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 38, wherein the account management system further comprises a reporting system that lists the operations
10 archived by the track and trace system in reports and provides the reports to users.

49. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 48, wherein the reporting system creates a history log from the track and trace events.

15 50. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the account management system further comprises a customer service system.

51. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the buy/sell system further comprises:

- 20 a catalog sales system;
- an auction sales system;
- a matching system that, in response to a capacity query or a demand query, produces all matches from the catalog sales system and the auction sales system;
- the creation of a purchase event in response to the user selecting at least one of the
- 25 matches;
- a pricing system that creates a price for the match selected by the user; and

5 a tender agreement creation system which begins in response to the creation of a
purchase event and creates the tender agreement which includes the price.

52. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the capacity
query and the demand query may be saved as a template.

10 53. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the buy/sell
system further comprises single-leg freight transportation services.

54. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the buy/sell
15 system further comprises multi-leg freight transportation services.

55. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 54, wherein the multi-
leg freight transportation services include multi-modal freight transportation services.

20 56. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 54, wherein the multi-
leg freight transportation services include a plurality of sellers wherein one of the
plurality of sellers is an accepting party and another one of the plurality of sellers is an
equipment party.

25 57. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 54, wherein one of the
plurality of sellers is both the accepting party and the equipment party.

58. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 56, wherein the multi-leg freight transportation services include seller-created multi-leg freight transportation services.

10 59. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 56, wherein the multi-leg freight transportation services include marketplace-created multi-leg freight transportation services.

15 60. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 59, wherein the equipment party and the accepting party are initially chosen by the marketplace.

61. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 60, wherein the equipment party may subsequently choose the accepting party.

20 62. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 59, wherein the user interface portion includes a marketplace-created multi-leg freight transportation services portion.

25 63. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 62, wherein the marketplace-created multi-leg freight transportation services portion includes a 2-way interaction among the users and the marketplace.

64. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 56, wherein the multi-leg freight transportation services include seller-created multi-leg freight transportation services and marketplace-created multi-leg freight transportation services

10 65. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the matches include multi-leg matches.

66. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 65, wherein the matches include multi-modal matches.

15 67. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the matches include single-leg matches.

68. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the
20 matching system produces matches with the most effective rates.

69. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the matching system produces matches with the most specific rates.

25 70. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the matching system produces only the matches that are not restrictions.

71. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the matching system produces infeasible matches.

72. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the user
10 selecting at least one match comprises placing an order.

73. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 72, wherein the order includes an expiration date.

15 74. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 72, wherein the order includes a maximum value.

75. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the auction sales mechanism comprises at least one auction.

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76. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 75, wherein the at least one auction comprises public and private auctions.

77. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 75, wherein the at least
25 one auction comprises information from a location profile.

5 78. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 75, wherein the at least one auction comprises an expiration date.

79. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 76, wherein the at least one auction comprises a reserve value.

10 80. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 75, wherein at least one user places an order on the at least one auction.

81. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the auction
15 sales system comprises an accept and continue feature.

82. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 81, wherein the user interface portion includes an auction sales system user interface portion.

20 83. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 82, wherein the auction sales system user interface portion includes, a manual interaction among the users and the marketplace and a 1-way interaction with process enrichment among the users and the marketplace.

25 84. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 75, wherein the auction sales system comprises a reject with comments feature.

85. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 75, wherein the auction sales mechanism comprises a seller's auction.

86. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 85, wherein at least one buyer places an order
10 on the seller's auction.

87. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 86, wherein the order includes a maximum value.

15 88. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 75, wherein the auction sales mechanism comprises a buyer's auction.

89. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 88, wherein the at least one seller places an order on a buyer's auction.

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90. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 89, wherein the order includes a minimum value.

91. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the catalog sales system includes
25 public sales.

5 92. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the catalog sales system includes private sales.

93. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 51 wherein the matching further includes radius matching.

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94. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the price includes at least a seller's charges and a marketplace fees.

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95. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 94, wherein the price further includes at least a buyer's price and a seller's price, wherein the buyer's price includes the seller's charges plus the marketplace fees and wherein the seller's price includes the seller's charges minus the marketplace fees.

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96. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 94, wherein the seller's charge includes at least a fuel surcharge.

97. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 96, wherein the fuel surcharge is obtained from the account management system.

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98. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 94, wherein the seller's charge includes at least an accessorial fee.

99. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 94, wherein the marketplace fee comprises at least an exchange transaction fee.

100. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 99, wherein the exchange transaction fee
10 comprises an effective date.

101. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 94, wherein the marketplace fee further comprises at least a payment option fee.

102. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 94, wherein the marketplace fee further
15 comprises at least a discount.

103. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 94, wherein the marketplace fee further comprises at least a cancellation fee.

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104. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 51 wherein the tender agreement creation system allows review and acceptance of a tender agreement by the buyer and the seller.

105. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 104 wherein the tender agreement further
25 includes seller's rules tariffs and marketplace rules.

5 106. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 51 wherein the tender agreement is consummated upon acceptance by the at least two users.

107. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 106, wherein acceptance by one of the at least two users is deemed given when that one of the at least two users selects at least one
10 match.

108. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 51 wherein each of the at least two users can cancel the tender agreement before it is consummated.

15 109. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 51, wherein the user interface portion includes a tender agreement creation system user interface portion.

110. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 109, wherein the tender agreement creation system user interface portion includes any of a manual interaction among the users and
20 the marketplace, a 1-way interaction among the users and the interface and a 1-way interaction with process enrichment among the uses and the marketplace.

111. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the order fulfillment mechanism further comprises an exception management system.

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5 112. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 111, wherein the seller's account includes a seller's rules tariff, the tender agreement is for a shipment and was consummated by a first party and a second party and the exception management system comprises the steps of, the marketplace:

allowing the first party to make a request for a change;

10 determining if the shipment has been loaded;

determining if the first party has the role of buyer;

determining if the change is compatible with the seller's rules tariffs;

if the shipment has been loaded and the first party does not have the role of buyer, or if the shipment has been loaded and the first party does have the role of
15 buyer and the change is not compatible with the seller's rules tariff, or if the shipment has not been loaded, determining whether the second party accepts the change;

if the second party accepts the change, amending the tender agreement to reflect the change;

if the second party does not accept the change, determining
20 whether the first party is willing to amend the request for a change;

if the first party is not willing to amend the request for a change determining whether the first party wishes to revoke the tender agreement;

if the first party wishes to revoke the tender agreement, revoking the tender agreement;

5 if the first party is willing to amend the request for a change, allowing the first party to amend the request for a change, thus creating an amended request for a change, and to make the amended request for a change;

if the shipment has been loaded, the first party is the buyer, and the change request is compatible with the seller's rules tariff, allowing the seller to make a good faith attempt to accommodate the change request.

113. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 112, wherein the exception management system allows the tender agreement to be modified after it has been consummated.

15 114. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the order fulfillment mechanism further comprises a payment system.

115. A marketplace as claimed in Claim 114, wherein the buy/sell system includes track and trace events and the payment system includes an automated collection and distribution system.

116. A marketplace as claimed in claim 115, wherein the automated collection and distribution system moves funds from the buyer's account to the seller's account in response to one of the track and trace events.

5 117. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the order fulfillment system further comprises a collection system.

118. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the marketplace guarantees payment of the seller's charges to the sellers.

10 119. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 118, wherein the marketplace guarantees payment of the seller's charges minus the accessorial fees to the sellers.

15 120. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the order fulfillment mechanism further comprises an invoicing system.

121. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 111, wherein the order fulfillment system further comprises an accessorial fee update system.

20 122. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 121, wherein the order fulfillment system further comprises accessorial events and wherein the marketplace determines whether the accessorial events are legitimate.

5 123. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 122, wherein the
accessorial fee update system comprises the seller providing a final accessorial
notification to the marketplace of an accessorial fee.

124. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 123, wherein the buyer
10 can approve or not approve the accessorial fee after the seller provides the final
accessorial notification to the marketplace.

125. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 124, wherein if the
buyer does not approve the accessorial fee, thereby creating a dilemma, the buyer and
15 seller may use the exception management system to resolve the dilemma.

126. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the order
fulfillment system comprises an exception management system, an accessorial fee update
system, a payment system, a collection system and an invoicing system.

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127. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the action
defining system defines:

possible user actions;

possible user information; and

25 consequences of the possible user actions.

5 128. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 127, wherein
the action defining system comprises roles and events, wherein roles are assigned
to users;
the possible user actions and the consequences of the possible user actions are
defined by the roles and events; and
10 the possible user information is defined by the roles and events.

129. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 128, comprising any one
of the roles and any one of the events, wherein any of the roles combined with any one of
the events comprises a role/event combination and wherein, in the action defining
15 system:
the possible user actions and the consequences of the possible user actions are
defined by the role/event combination; and
the possible user information is defined by the role/event combination.

20 130. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 129, wherein, in the
action defining system:
the roles include
at least one privilege, wherein the at least one privilege defines the
possible user actions; and
25 at least one scope, wherein the at least one scope defines the possible user
information; and

5 the events include

 at least one type; and

 at least one status wherein the at least one status defines a state of the type

 at a point in time and

 wherein the type and status restrict the possible user actions defined by the

10 at least one privilege and the possible user information defined by the scope and together

 with the privilege and scope define the consequences of the possible user actions.

131. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 130, wherein, in the

 action defining system, each of the at least one status does not define every at least one

15 type.

132. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 129, wherein, in the

 action defining system the roles comprise a buyer and a seller.

20 133. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 132, wherein, in the

 action defining system, the roles are defined by the account management system.

134. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 132, wherein, in the

 action defining system, the buyer comprises

25 a privilege wherein the privilege includes purchasing freight transportation

 services; and

5 a scope, wherein the scope includes information relating to purchasing freight transportation services.

135. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 132, wherein, in the action defining system, the seller comprises

10 a privilege wherein the privilege includes selling freight transportation services; and

a scope, wherein the scope includes information relating to selling freight transportation services.

15 136. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 135, wherein, in the action defining system, the possible user actions, and the possible user information are further defined by an event and wherein the event together with the role defines the consequences of the possible user actions.

20 137. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 136, wherein, in the action defining system, the event comprises:

a type; and

a status wherein the status defines the state of the type at a point in time.

25 138. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 137, wherein, in the action defining system, the type includes one from a group consisting of the following:

5 order, catalog rate, auction or tender agreement.

139. A freight transportation marketplace as claimed in Claim 138, wherein, in the action defining system, the status includes one from a group consisting of the following: entered, auction, pending, accepted, en route, delivered, history, rejected or retracted.

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140. A freight transportation marketplace accessible to users over a network, comprising:

an account management system that assigns roles to the users, wherein the roles include buyers, sellers and account administrators and defines buyer and seller accounts
15 and buyer and seller operations, wherein the account management system comprises:

an account maintenance system that includes a user level which includes at least one user and defines user operations, a user group level which includes at least one user group and defines the buyer and seller accounts, wherein the at least one user group includes at least one user and defines the accounts and the roles, and a payor group
20 level which includes at least one payor group and defines a membership status and the user groups,

a rate management system for the seller accounts which includes a catalog rate management system, a fuel surcharge management system, and an accessorial fee management system,

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a track and trace system that archives track and trace events wherein the track and trace events archive the operations, and

5 a reporting system that lists the operations archived by the track and trace system,

a buy/sell system for the creation of a tender agreement between at least a buyer and a seller, comprising:

a catalog sales system which facilitates private and public sales,

10 an auction sales system which may includes seller's auctions and buyer's auctions,

multi-leg freight transportation services, including multi-modal freight transportation services, seller-created multi-leg freight transportation services and marketplace-created freight transportation services, wherein the multi-leg freight transportation services are sold through the catalog sales system and the auction sales system,

a matching system that, in response to a capacity query or a demand query, produces all matches from the catalog sales system and the auction sales system,

a system for creating a purchase event, wherein the purchase event is created in response to the selection of any match by a user,

a pricing system that creates a price for the selected match, and

a tender agreement creation system which begins in response to the creation of a purchase event, allows at least two of the at least two users to review, negotiate, approve and cancel the tender agreement, consummates the tender agreement upon acceptance by the at least two users and includes the price;

5 an order fulfillment system for the tender agreement which includes an exception
management system which allows the at least two users to modify the tender agreement,
a payment system which includes automated payment and distribution; and
an action defining system, comprising
at least one role, wherein at least one role is assigned to each of the users,
10 comprising
at least one privilege, wherein the at least one privilege defines
possible user actions, and
at least one scope, wherein the at least one scope defines possible
user information, and
15 at least one event, comprising:
at least one type, and
at least one status, wherein the at least one status defines a state of
the type at a point in time, and wherein the type and status restrict the possible user
actions defined by the at least one privilege and the possible user information defined by
20 the scope and together with the privilege and the scope, define consequences of the
possible user actions.

141. At least one server in communication with a network comprising:

an account management system that manages buyer and seller accounts and buyer
25 and seller operations;

5 a buy/sell system for the creation and consummation of a tender agreement
between at least a buyer and a seller;
an order fulfillment system for fulfilling the tender agreement;
an action defining system wherein the action defining system assigns at least one
role to the at least one buyer and one seller; and
10 a user interface portion that allows communication among the at least one servier
and the network.

142. An account management system for a marketplace that includes buyer and seller
accounts and track and trace events and is accessible over a network by buyers and sellers
15 through the buyer and seller accounts, wherein the system manages the buyer and seller
accounts and the buyer and seller operations, comprising:
an account maintenance system that maintains the buyer and seller accounts;
a rate management system associated with the seller accounts; and
a track and trace system that archives track and trace events.

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143. An account management system as claimed in Claim 142, wherein the account
maintenance system comprises a plurality of user profiles.

144. An account management system as claimed in Claim 143, wherein the account
25 maintenance system further comprises a plurality of seller's profiles and a plurality of
buyer's profiles.

145. An account management system as claimed in Claim 144, wherein the seller's profiles comprise a seller's rules tariff.

146. An account management system as claimed in Claim 142, wherein the account
10 maintenance system includes a hierarchical account structure.

147. An account management system as claimed in Claim 146, wherein the hierarchical account structure provides security for the users.

148. An account management system as claimed in Claim 146, wherein the
15 hierarchical account structure includes at least three levels.

149. An account management system as claimed in Claim 148 wherein the at least three levels include, a payor group level which defines at least one payor group, a user
20 group level which defines at least one user group and a user level which defines at least one user.

150. An account management system as claimed in Claim 149 wherein each payor group and each user is assigned at least one role.

5 151. An account management system as claimed in Claim 150 wherein the roles
comprise, buyer and seller.

152. An account management system as claimed in Claim 151 wherein the roles
further comprise, an account administrator.

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153. An account management system as claimed in Claim 152 wherein the roles
further comprise, a rate administrator, a rate contact, a tender contact and an accounting
contact.

15 154. An account management system as claimed in Claim 150 wherein the role defines
at least one scope and one privilege.

155. An account management system as claimed in Claim 154 wherein the hierarchical
account structure provides functional security, data security and authentication.

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156. An account management system as claimed in Claim 150 wherein,
the payor group level defines a membership status and the user groups;
the user group level defines accounts, the users and the roles; and
the user level defines user operations.

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5 157. An account management system as claimed in Claim 142 wherein the rate management system comprises:

- a catalog rate management system;
- an accessorial fee management system; and
- a fuel surcharge management system.

10 158. An account management system as claimed in 157 wherein the rate management system allows sellers to indicate their desire to participate in marketplace-created freight transportation services.

15 159. An account management system as claimed in Claim 158 wherein the catalog rate management system further comprises the steps of the account management system:

- allowing the seller to provide to the marketplace and maintain the rates over the network;
- allowing the seller to approve the rates; and
- 20 making the rates available to the users.

160. An account management system as claimed in Claim 157 wherein the catalog rate management system further comprises public and private rates.

25 161. An account management system as claimed in Claim 159 wherein the fuel surcharge system comprises a means for allowing sellers to manage fuel surcharges.

162. An account management system as claimed in Claim 161 wherein the fuel surcharge system comprises fuel surcharges managed by the seller wherein the fuel surcharges comprise effective dates.

10 163. An account management system as claimed in Claim 157 wherein the rate management system further comprises a track and trace system that archives track and trace events.

15 164. An account management system as claimed in Claim 163 wherein track and trace events may be created by the users or the marketplace or by both.

165. An account management system as claimed in Claim 163 wherein some of the track and trace events trigger messages to the users.

20 166. An account management system as claimed in Claim 142, further comprising an enrollment system.

167. An account management system as claimed in Claim 166, wherein the enrollment system further comprises:

25 an introduction component, wherein the introduction component provides an introduction to the marketplace;

5 a demonstration component, wherein the demonstration component provides a demonstration of the marketplace; and

an enrollment processing system that enrolls the buyers and the sellers in the marketplace and establishes the buyer and seller accounts.

10 168. An account management system as claimed in Claim 142, further comprising a reporting system that lists the track and trace events archived by the track and trace system in reports and provides the reports to the users.

15 169. An account management system as claimed in Claim 168, further comprising a customer service system.

20 170. An account management system for a marketplace that includes buyer and seller accounts and track and trace events and is accessible over a network by buyers and sellers through the buyer and seller accounts, wherein the system manages the buyer and seller accounts and the track and trace events, comprising:

an enrollment system that comprises, an introduction component, a demonstration component, and an enrollment processing system wherein the enrollment processing system enrolls buyers and seller with the marketplace and establishes the buyer and seller accounts;

5 a account maintenance system, which includes at least, a payor group level which defines at least one payor group, a user group level which defines at least one user group and a user level which defines at least one user;

 a rate management system which includes a catalog rate management system, a fuel surcharge management system, and an accessorial fee management system;

10 a track and trace system that archives the track and trace events; and

 a reporting system that lists the operations archived by the track and trace system in reports and provides the reports to the users.

171. A buy/sell system accessible over a network for the creation of a tender agreement between at least two users, comprising:

15 a catalog sales system;

 an auction sales system;

 multi-leg freight transportation services provided through the catalog sales system, the auction sales system or both the catalog sales system and the auction sales system;

20 a matching system that, in response to a capacity query or a demand query, produces all matches from the catalog sales system and the auction sales system;

 the creation of a purchase event in response to the selection of any match by any of the users;

25 a pricing system that creates a price for the selected match; and

5 a tender agreement creation system which is initiated in response to the creation of the purchase event and includes the price.

172. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171 wherein the multi-leg freight transportation services comprise multi-modal freight transportation services.

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173. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171 wherein the multi-leg freight transportation services include a plurality of sellers wherein one of the plurality of sellers is an accepting party and another one of the plurality of sellers is an equipment party.

15 174. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 173, wherein one of the plurality of sellers is both the accepting party and the equipment party.

175. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171 wherein the multi-leg freight transportation services include seller-created multi-leg freight transportation services.

20

176. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 173 wherein the multi-leg freight transportation services include marketplace-created multi-leg freight transportation services.

25 177 A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 176 wherein the equipment party and the accepting party are initially chosen by the buy/sell system.

178. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 177 wherein the equipment party may subsequently choose the accepting party.

179. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171 wherein the multi-leg freight
10 transportation services include marketplace-created multi-leg freight transportation
services and seller-created multi-leg freight transportation services.

180. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the capacity query and the
demand query may be saved as a template.

15

181. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the matches include single-
leg matches.

182. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the matches include multi-leg
20 matches.

183. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 182, wherein the multi-leg matches include
multi-modal matches.

25

5 184. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the catalog sales system facilitates public sales.

185. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the catalog sales system facilitates private sales.

10

186. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the auction sales system facilitates a seller's auction.

187. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the auction sales system facilitates a buyer's auction.

15

188. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the matching system includes radius matching.

20 189. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 182, wherein the matching system includes matches with the most effective rates.

190. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the matching system includes matches with the most specific rates.

25

5 191. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the matching system produces infeasible matches.

192. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the user selecting at least one match comprises placing an order.

10

193. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 192, wherein the order includes an expiration date.

194. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 192, wherein the order includes a
15 maximum value.

195. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the auction sales mechanism comprises at least one auction.

20 196. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 195, wherein the at least one auction comprises public and private auctions.

197. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 195, wherein the at least one auction comprises information from a location profile.

25

5 198. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 195, wherein the at least one auction comprises an expiration date.

199. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 195, wherein the at least one auction comprises a reserve value.

10

200. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the auction sales system comprises an accept and continue feature.

201. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 195, wherein the auction sales system
15 comprises a reject with comments feature.

202. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the matching system produces only the matches that are not restrictions.

20 203. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the price includes at least a seller's charges and a marketplace fees.

204. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 203, wherein the price further includes at least a buyer's price and a seller's price, wherein the buyer's price includes the seller's
25 charges plus the marketplace fees and wherein the seller's price includes the seller's charges minus the marketplace fees.

205. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 204, wherein the seller's charges includes at least a fuel surcharge.

206. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 204, wherein the seller's charges further
10 include at least an accessorial fee.

207. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 203, wherein the marketplace fee includes a discount.

15 208. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 203, wherein the marketplace fee includes a cancellation fee.

209. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 203, wherein the marketplace fee includes an exchange transaction fee.

20

210. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 203, wherein the marketplace fee includes a payment option fee.

211. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the marketplace fee includes
25 a cancellation fee, a discount, an exchange transaction fee and a payment option fee.

5 212. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 171, wherein the tender agreement creation system consummates the tender agreement upon acceptance by the at least two users.

213. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 212, wherein acceptance by one of the at least two users is deemed given when that one of the at least two users selects at least one
10 match.

214. A buy/sell system as claimed in Claim 212, wherein the tender agreement creation system permits each of the at least two users to cancel the tender agreement before it is consummated.

15 215. A buy/sell system for the creation of a tender agreement between a buyer and a seller, comprising:

a catalog sales system that includes public and private sales;
an auction sales system that includes seller's auctions and buyer's auctions;
20 multi-leg freight transportation services, including multi-modal freight transportation services, seller-created multi-leg freight transportation services and marketplace-created freight transportation services, wherein the multi-leg freight transportation services are sold through the catalog sales system and/or the auction sales system;

25 a matching system that, in response to a capacity query or a demand query, produces all matches from the catalog sales system and the auction sales system,

5 the creation of a purchase event in response to the selection of any match by any
of the buyers or sellers;

a pricing system that creates a price, wherein the price includes a fuel surcharge
and an accessorial fee, and the marketplace fee includes an exchange transaction fee, a
payment option fee; a cancellation fee and a discount, and

10 a tender agreement creation system which begins in response to the creation of the
purchase event and comprises:

the creation of a preliminary tender agreement that includes at least the price;

review of the preliminary tender agreement by at least one of the buyer or the
seller; and

15 creation of a tender agreement from and upon acceptance by the buyer and the
seller of the preliminary tender agreement.

216. An order fulfillment system accessible over a network by buyers and sellers
which enables fulfillment of a tender agreement, comprising:

20 a exception management system; and
a payment system.

217. An order fulfillment system as claimed in Claim 216, wherein the exception
management system enables the tender agreement to be cancelled.

25

5 218. An order fulfillment system as claimed in Claim 217, comprising a seller's account which includes a seller's rules tariff and wherein the tender agreement is for a shipment and was consummated by a first party and a second party and the exception management system comprises the steps of:

allowing the first party to make a request for a change;

10 determining if the shipment has been loaded;

determining if the first party has the role of buyer;

determining if the change is compatible with the seller's rules tariffs;

if the shipment has been loaded and the first party does not have the role of buyer, or if the shipment has been loaded and the first party does have the role of
15 buyer and the change is not compatible with the seller's rules tariff, or if the shipment has not been loaded, determining whether the second party accepts the change;

if the second party accepts the change, amending the tender agreement to reflect the change;

if the second party does not accept the change, determining
20 whether the first party is willing to amend the request for a change;

if the first party is not willing to amend the request for a change determining whether the first party wishes to revoke the tender agreement;

if the first party wishes to revoke the tender agreement, revoking the tender agreement;

5 if the first party is willing to amend the request for a change, allowing the first party to amend the request for a change and make a request for the amended request for a change;

if the shipment has been loaded, the first party is the buyer, and the change request is compatible with the seller's rules tariff allowing the seller to make a good faith attempt to accommodate the change request.

10

219. An order fulfillment system as claimed in Claim 218, wherein the payment system includes automated collection and disbursement system.

15 220. An order fulfillment system as claimed in Claim 219, wherein automated collection and disbursement system is initiated in response to track and trace events.

221. An order fulfillment system as claimed in Claim 216, further comprising a collection system.

20

222. An order fulfillment system as claimed in Claim 221, further comprising a invoicing system.

223. An order fulfillment system as claimed in Claim 221, further comprising an
25 accessorial fee update system.

5 224. An order fulfillment system as claimed in Claim 223, wherein the accessorial fee
update system comprises the seller providing a final accessorial notification to the
marketplace of an accessorial fee.

225. An order fulfillment system as claimed in Claim 223, wherein the buyer can
10 approve or not approve the accessorial fee after the seller provides the final accessorial
notification to the marketplace.

226. An order fulfillment system as claimed in Claim 223, wherein if the buyer does
not approve the accessorial fee, thereby creating a dilemma, the buyer and seller may use
15 the exception management system to resolve the dilemma.

227. An action defining system that defines
possible user actions;
possible user information; and
20 consequences of the possible user actions.

228. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 227 wherein the action defining
system is for use with a marketplace.

25 229. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 227 wherein
the action defining system comprises roles, wherein roles are assigned to users

5 and events;

the possible user actions and the consequences of the possible user actions are defined by the roles and events; and

the possible user information is defined by the roles and events.

10 230. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 229, wherein the roles are defined by an account management system.

231. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 229 wherein

15 the possible user actions and the consequences of the possible user actions are defined by a role/event combination, wherein the role/event combination comprises one of the roles and one of the events; and

the possible user information is defined by a role/event combination, wherein the role/event combination comprises one of the roles and one of the events.

20 232. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 231 wherein

the roles include

at least one privilege, wherein the at least one privilege defines the possible user actions; and

25 at least one scope, wherein the at least one scope defines the possible user information; and

the events include

5 at least one type; and

 at least one status wherein the at least one status defines the state of the

type at a point in time and

 wherein the type and status restrict the possible user actions defined by the

at least one privilege and the possible user information defined by the scope and together

10 with the privilege and scope define the consequences of the possible user actions.

233. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 232 wherein each of the at least

one status does not define every at least one type.

15 234. An action defining system for use with a freight transportation marketplace that

defines

 possible user actions;

 possible user information; and

 consequences possible user actions.

20

235. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 234 wherein

 the action defining system comprises roles, wherein roles are assigned to users

and events;

 the possible user actions and the consequences of the possible user actions are

25 defined by the roles and events; and

 the possible user information is defined by the roles and events.

236. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 235 wherein

the possible user actions and the consequences of the possible user actions are defined by a role/event combination, wherein the role/event combination comprises one of the roles and one of the events; and

10 the possible user information is defined by a role/event combination, wherein the role/event combination comprises one of the roles and one of the events.

237. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 236 wherein

the roles include

15 at least one privilege, wherein the at least one privilege defines the possible user actions; and

at least one scope, wherein the at least one scope defines the possible user information; and

the events include

20 at least one type; and

at least one status wherein the at least one status defines the state of the type at a point in time and

wherein the type and status restrict the possible user actions defined by the at least one privilege and the possible user information defined by the scope and together
25 with the privilege and scope define the consequences of the possible user actions.

5 238. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 237 wherein each of the at least one status does not define every at least one type.

239. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 236 wherein the roles comprise a buyer and a seller.

10

240. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 239, wherein the roles are defined by an account management system.

15

241. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 239, wherein the buyer comprises a privilege wherein the privilege is purchasing freight transportation services; and a scope, wherein the scope is information relating to purchasing freight transportation services.

20

242. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 239, wherein the seller comprises a privilege wherein the privilege is selling freight transportation services; and a scope, wherein the scope information relating to selling freight transportation services.

25

243. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 241, wherein the possible user actions, and the possible user information are further defined by an event and wherein the event together with the role defines the consequences of the possible user actions.

244. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 243, wherein the event comprises
a type; and
a status wherein the status defines the state of the type at a point in time.

10 245. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 244, wherein the type includes one
from a group consisting of the following: order, catalog rate, auction or tender agreement.

246. An action defining system as claimed in Claim 245, wherein the status includes
one from a group consisting of the following: entered, auction, pending, accepted, en
15 route, delivered, history, rejected or retracted.

For the purposes of this document, the following definitions apply: